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Kent presided and some thirty-five delegates were in attendance. We take pleasure in presenting here a synopsis of Professor Kent's opening address, and a resume of some of the other addresses made, by order of the Conference, by Professor Fred Merrifield of the University of Chicago.

### **PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS—THE CHIEF OBJECTIVES OF OUR WORK.**

(By Prof. Charles F. Kent.)

The aims of our Association of Biblical Instructors have been gradually defined in the light of practical experience. Briefly stated, the chief are: (1) To bring together into close fraternal relations all secondary school and college instructors and educational and Christian Association secretaries who are working in Biblical and related departments. (2) To correlate the results of the practical experience of each instructor and department and to make them available for all. (3) To develop courses and methods of Biblical study that will meet the needs of the American student and conform to the highest educational standards. (4) To standardize the Biblical work in the secondary schools of America and to co-ordinate it with that of the church school on the one side and with that of the college on the other. (5) To co-operate in establishing new departments of Biblical literature in the American colleges and preparatory schools and to increase the equipment and efficiency of those already established.

To define briefly the chief objectives of the Biblical work in our American colleges and secondary schools is not an easy task. No other department represents such a variety of material. None appeals to more fundamental interests. None touches intimately more departments: literature, history, psychology, philosophy, sociology and economics. In many of our larger colleges, especially in the East, the Biblical departments are only partially developed, yet none have greater possibilities and from the point of view of both the individual student and of society they are most important. It is significant that in these strenuous days when the Greek and Latin classics are being sadly neglected, the Biblical

classes are receiving each day wider recognition in our American educational system.

The proverb, "Shakespeare and the Bible are the foundation of a liberal education," is winning wide acceptance. The reason is partially historical and partially because of the pre-eminent value of the life and literature that the Bible represents. One hundred and fifty years ago Biblical history and literature constituted almost the entire curriculum of our American colleges. Then came the introduction of scientific subjects and methods of study and the gradual disappearance of the Bible from the college curriculum. This disappearance was largely due to the fact that the Biblical instructors persisted in retaining dogmatic, instead of adopting scientific methods of investigation and interpretation. By the middle of the last century Bible study had been almost completely dropped from a large majority of our leading secondary schools as well as colleges.

During the last two decades of the nineteenth century the tide again turned. The change was due to the adoption of the historical, literary and scientific methods that had gained universal acceptance in other departments of education. During the past quarter century, scores of Biblical departments have been established in our leading American colleges, until there are now over two hundred and fifty, and the institution that is not thus equipped is a marked exception.

In this forward step the secondary schools have lagged behind the colleges chiefly because general recognition has not been given for Biblical work in admission to college. The leading preparatory schools of the country simply await this recognition before establishing thoroughly equipped Biblical departments. Now that the report of the national commission appointed to outline a standardized Biblical curriculum for secondary schools has been submitted, there is every reason to believe that the American colleges will follow the example of Columbia, the University of Chicago, Dartmouth and other institutions in placing Biblical History among their regular entrance subjects. Already forty states give formal recognition in high schools or state universities, or in both, for extra-mural work in Biblical history. The weekday Bible study movement is sweeping through America from the Middle West

to the Atlantic and Pacific. This movement is doubly portentous because it has come from the rank and file of the people and has the united support of Protestants, Roman Catholics and Jews. The output of books and the popular interest in this field suggest that we are on the eve of a great renaissance of Biblical study.

The world situation undoubtedly is in part responsible for this new interest; but the reason lies deeper. It is the discovery that the chief aims and values of the Bible are not theological, as our forefathers thought, but historical, literary, social, educational, and in the most practical sense, religious.

These fundamental values and the dominant interests of the present generation define the main objectives of our work. These objectives may be categorically stated thus: (1) To familiarize our students with the great characters, movements and events recorded in the Bible. Measured by every standard, that thrilling chapter in human history which witnessed the rise of Judaism and Christianity and the birth of democracy is the most important in the life of humanity. (2) To make the thought and literature of the Bible clear and vital and inspiring to the youth of the twentieth century. (3) To compare and relate that literature with the other great inspirational literatures of the world. (4) To study the fundamental social and ethical principles of the Bible and to interpret them into modern language and life. (5) To show how the history, the literature and the social principles of the Bible may be utilized for the religious education of the individual and of the modern community. (6) To lay in the mind of each student the foundations for a practical, personal philosophy.

Our first, our most difficult, and in many ways, most vital task is to give the general body of college students that intimate acquaintance with the supreme classics of the human race that will enable them intelligently and successfully to function as individuals, as parents and as citizens in the new world order.

Our second, and more specialized task, is to train the thousands of teachers required to man the Biblical departments already or soon to be established in colleges and secondary schools, and to give instruction in week-day Bible

schools, in church schools and in Christian Association and community classes. The breadth of the field and the magnitude of the demands that are suddenly being made upon us are great. By close co-operation, by tireless effort and by setting our standards high, we can and must meet this challenge to service where service is most needed.

### **TYPES OF RELIGIOUS WORK FOR WHICH WE MAY DEFINITELY TRAIN OUR STUDENTS.**

(Prof. Robert Scott Calder.)

By religious work I understand those activities in which the church is engaged. That may seem to be an arbitrary restriction of the term, but even as thus defined its scope is sufficiently and surprisingly broad. Taking the point of view of the individual in the local church, we may say that work in connection with any of the agencies directly connected with the church or in which the church is directly interested or concerned may properly be called religious work. I think, too, in the spirit of the Master's words, "He that is not against us is for us," we shall have to add to this group of church activities another class of inter-church or extra-church activities, if we would complete the meaning of the term even in this restricted sense. There are in every community certain outstanding organizations or institutions, born of the Christian church, whose heart and motives are thoroughly religious and Christian, and which are doing a varied work which can rightly and without apology be called religious. Some of these agencies are local in character, growing out of community needs, as for example, civic federations or social settlements; others are national and international in scope, as for example, the Boy Scout movement. **Here, then, is the field for religious service—work within the local church, and work through inter-church or extra-church agencies.**

Since the training we have in mind is neither professional nor vocational, but rather training for voluntary Christian service, we may confine our attention to the group of activities within the local church. Here is where the vast majority of our students will do religious work, if at all. This is the first, the immediate, and the most important field